

Remembering the Revolution
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In August 1779, shock waves from the battles at Stony Point and Minisink continued to reverberate in the Valley. The amplitude increased with news of the successful raid on Paulus Hook, New Jersey, and of the victory over the British, Loyalists, and Iroquois at the Battle of Newtown.

From his headquarters at West Point, Gen. George Washington issued orders on August 7 announcing the Continental Congress's recognition of the gallantry of Brig. Gen. Anthony Wayne's Light Infantry Corps in the Battle of Stony Point. It ordered a gold medal struck for Wayne, and silver medals for French Lieut. Col. Teissedre de Fleury (the first to enter the works) and Maj. John Stewart. So important did Congress view this victory that the three medals were matched by only five others awarded during the war.

On August 19, American morale received another lift when Capt. "Light-Horse" Harry Lee (with 400 Virginians, Marylanders, and Delawareans) raided the British fortifications at Paulus Hook (in present-day Jersey City) in a Stony Point-like attack. After marching more than 18 miles, Lee's men forded the tidal moat protecting the works just before dawn; in less than 30 minutes they captured 158 members of the garrison. After a court-martial to sort out Lee's assumption of command of the expedition, he also received a gold medal from Congress. Hessian Capt. Johann Ewald concluded that "The surprise attack, as well as that on Stony... succeeded because these posts were surrounded on the side toward the enemy by a morass on whose depth the English depended and which they had considered impassable."

On the frontier at Newtown (near today's Elmira), Gen. James Clinton and his brigade of New Yorkers played an important role in the victory on August 29. Taking advantage of Iroquois chief Joseph Brant's decision to stand and fight from an ambush along the Chemung River, Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor's Continentals flushed out the Native Americans and pushed Maj. John Butler's Loyalist Rangers and regulars of the British 8th Regiment off the hill anchoring the left flank. Clinton's brigade, including the 5th New York (which had fought so gallantly at Fort Montgomery), helped stop Brant's counterattack. Clinton observed that "My brigade which had just reached the foot of the Hill when the firing commenced, pushed up with such ardor that many of them almost fainted and fell down with excessive heat and fatigue." American casualties were three killed and some 50 wounded; the British force may have had as many as 38 killed. Of greater long-term significance, the Americans destroyed 6,000 bushels of corn. By the end of the campaign in November, such actions - repeated over and over - effectively destroyed the Six Nations of the Iroquois.

For information about events commemorating the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution, visit www.hudsonrivervalley.net.

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