The Battle of Monmouth
How the Continental Army used the environmental conditions to gain victory on June 28, 1778

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Chapter I: The Events that Preceded the Battle of Monmouth

“…you have been wishing some days past to come up with the British, you have been wanting to fight, - now you shall have fighting enough before night”\textsuperscript{1}

As the Captain told his Rhode Island troops, the American Continental Army was to meet the British troops on a field at Monmouth Courthouse on June 28, 1778. The Battle of Monmouth was the largest one-day battle of the American Revolution and was the last major battle fought in the Northern Theater. The Continental Army withstood aggressive British counterattacks as they remained in control of the battlefield at the end of the day. General George Washington’s troops secured the victory through their defense of the important high ground and their ability to adapt to the 107 degrees. The fighting would continue in the American Revolution for three more years, yet the Battle of Monmouth was a crucial turning point of the American Revolution. For the first time, the Continental Army showed the necessary discipline to repel numerous British bayonet attacks by the best units in the British Army and controlled the battlefield as dusk fell. The American Continental Army claimed a military victory and, more importantly, a major momentum swing at the Battle of Monmouth through the army’s advantageous use of the battlefield terrain and its superior handling of the intense heat.

The battle of Monmouth is a largely forgotten battle amongst literature on the American Revolution. In the majority of historical books, the battle is afforded, at most, one chapter in the overall narrative of the war. William Stryker’s \textit{Battle of Monmouth} is the premier book on the battle, yet this narrative will differ from Stryker’s work. Stryker focused on detailed military movements and infrequently mentioned the extreme heat, without delving into a more in-depth

\textsuperscript{1} As quoted in Joseph Plumb Martin, \textit{A Narrative Story of a Revolutionary Soldier} (New York: Signet Classic, 2001), 109.
discussion. The following discussion of the battle of Monmouth will explain the great impact of the heat on the days leading to the battle as well as the actual battle events. The heat affected both armies in the form of their altered military strategies and the soldiers fighting, many of whom fell dead due to the intensity of the heat.

In order to properly understand the battle of Monmouth, the careers of the military leaders and the events leading up to the battle must be discussed. On June 14, 1775 General George Washington was elected by the Second Continental Congress to the position of Commander-in-Chief of the newly created Continental Army. By the fall of 1777, however, Washington and the Continental Army still did not have a full-scale battlefield victory. Washington successfully besieged the city of Boston and forced the British to withdraw to New York City. Washington and the Continental Army achieved another military victory at the Battle of Trenton, in which the American soldiers overran the 1,500 Hessian soldiers, stationed in Trenton, New Jersey, through a surprise attack on December 25, 1776. However, these military victories gave a greater impetus to the patriots’ propaganda than to their military ambitions as they were small-scale attacks rather than lengthy general engagement battles.²

George Washington’s lack of military successes is not surprising when one looks at his previous military record. Washington fought for the British, as a Virginian militia leader against the French in the Ohio Valley, during which he ordered the attack that precipitated the full-scale French and Indian War in 1755. Washington’s military ineptitude during the Ohio Valley fighting was well-known; in fact, his name became synonymous with colonial incompetence. There are two major examples of his military ineptitude in the Ohio Valley fighting. Washington’s troops attacked a French scouting party and killed its leader, Joseph Coulon de

Jumonville. Unfortunately, after the subsequent capture of Washington’s Fort Necessity, he signed a paper which stated Jumonville was assassinated by Washington’s men, a statement that helped France justify the French and Indian War. Later in the war, Washington led an infamous friendly fire attack in which fourteen of his men were killed and twenty-six were wounded.  

His bravery in battle made Washington more famous than his military mistakes. Washington never shied away from the dangerous front line and throughout his career, starting in the Ohio Valley, General Washington could be seen leading his troops in battle. As a member of General Braddock’s expedition into the Ohio Valley in 1755, Washington organized and led a retreat that saved the majority of the expedition party after Braddock’s death. Washington’s skill in organizing a successful retreat was consequential in his ability to preserve the livelihood of the Continental Army in the first few years of the American Revolution. His history of military bravery in the Ohio Valley fighting, along with his residence in Virginia, earned Washington the election of the head of the Continental Army. Virginia was the largest colony in America and its support was necessary for the success of the American Revolution. In the early years of the Revolution, Washington lost numerous battles, yet his strength was that he always was able to save his army from capture through exceptionally organized retreats.

In the summer and fall of 1777, after the reversal of momentum at the battle of Trenton, the British ministry adopted a new strategy to end the colonial uprising. The majority of the revolutionary fervor was contained in the New England colonies, so the British leadership decided to cut off the rebellious New England colonies from the other American colonies. General John Burgoyne was to lead his troops from Quebec to Albany, where he would meet

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4 Langguth, *Patriots*, 290-304. quote is found on page 291.
with General William Howe’s troops marching north from New York City. Burgoyne’s troops were comprised of 4,000 British Regulars, 3,000 Hessian-Jaegers, 400 Native-Americans from the Iroquois, Algonquin, Abenaki, and Ottawa peoples, 300 Loyalists, and 300 Canadian woodsmen. General Howe ignored common military logic and remained in New York City rather than fully support Burgoyne. Howe dispatched troops no further north than Kingston, New York, on the Hudson River, before sailing to the Chesapeake Bay and marching to Philadelphia in order to capture the colonists’ de facto capital city. Even General Washington stated in a letter to American General George Clinton, “There can be as little room to doubt, that General Howe will cooperate with the Northern [Burgoyne’s] army” and further wrote to John Hancock, “I should not hesitate a moment in concluding [General Howe] is to cooperate with [General Burgoyne]”. On July 4, 1777, the British troops, moving south down Lake Champlain, easily captured the undersupplied Fort Ticonderoga. Burgoyne then decided to deviate from his original water route down Lake George to attempt an overland route through rough wilderness without the ability to gain reinforcements or supplies.\(^5\)

The British Army’s lack of supplies was drastically hurt by American General Philip Schuyler’s order to remove and/or destroy the crops and livestock near General Burgoyne’s troops. Burgoyne sent Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum on a raid of the apparently unprotected town of Bennington, Vermont. The town was defended by 2,000 militiamen from New Hampshire and Massachusetts under the leadership of General John Stark, who had marched into town after the British soldiers scouted the town. Stark’s troops encircled the British troops, stationed on a hilltop, and simultaneously attacked from all sides. The battle

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quickly delved into hand-to-hand combat and the American militia was able to overrun the British forces. General Burgoyne lost 15% of his total force, 700 killed and 200 captured. He also lost the support of the Native-Americans, who abandoned the British, and potential supplies. The British Army suffered great losses that could not be recovered due to the lack of reinforcements and supplies while the Continental Army received a massive influx of militiamen following its grand victory.\(^6\)

General Horatio Gates, the leader of the Continental Army near Saratoga, moved his troops to a heavily wooded area that would suit the American warfare style of shooting and seeking cover rather than the British style of exchanging volleys of musket fire. General Burgoyne’s troops met General Gates’ troops at Freeman’s Farm, New York on September 19, 1777. The British attack was arranged in three columns with the center column initiating the battle, whereas the American troops were formed in two columns under the leadership of General Benedict Arnold and Colonel Daniel Morgan. Morgan’s riflemen destroyed the British advance guard in the center column, which was only saved by British General Riedesel’s attack on the American right flank. Riedesel’s maneuver forced Gates to shift men into the right column rather than continuing the destruction of Burgoyne’s center column. Colonel Morgan’s riflemen moved to the right column and were able to hold the British troops in the right column stationary. The battle consisted of intense artillery fire and several bloody British bayonet charges that were pushed back by the strong willed Continental Army. As night fell on the battlefield, the American soldiers fell back to their fortifications at Bemis Heights, New York.

The British gained control of the field, yet suffered greatly with over 600 casualties compared to the 350 American casualties.  

Following the battle at Freeman’s Farm, General Burgoyne awaited General Henry Clinton’s planned attack on the Hudson River forts in hope that the attacks would pull away a portion of the Continental Army. The Continental Army harassed Burgoyne’s troops for two weeks as the British waited for reinforcements or the American forces being drawn away. On October 7, 1777, General Burgoyne attacked the Continental Army at Bemis Heights in five columns. The British desperately wanted to bring artillery to the hills surrounding Bemis Heights to combat the American artillery. Initially, Gates sent a small force until it was absolutely necessary for a larger supply of reinforcements to combat the full British thrust. The reinforcements were sent to the woods that flanked the battlefield. Colonel Morgan’s riflemen were able to circle around the British Army and come down a hill as they hit the British right column. American militia forced the left column into a retreat at the same time as the right column was retreating. General Arnold, who had been relieved of his duties following an argument with Gates, ignored his orders from Gates and led an attack on the British redoubt in the center column. The Hessian soldiers in the redoubt fled in an unorganized retreat, effectively ending the Battle of Bemis Heights. In 52 minutes, General Burgoyne lost 56% of his troops, with 278 dead, 331 wounded, and 285 captured. The American side only lost 30 and had 100 wounded. General Gates held the battlefield throughout the night. General Burgoyne retreated, yet was later encircled by Gates’ troops, who set up artillery on higher ground to west and to the south. General Burgoyne surrendered to General Gates on October 16, 1777 when it was clear that he would not receive reinforcements from General Clinton or General Howe.  

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During the summer of 1777, while Burgoyne had been waiting reinforcements, Howe decided, as previously mentioned, to capture the patriots’ capital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Despite its designation as the meeting site of the Second Continental Congress, Philadelphia was predominately populated by Loyalists and politically neutral citizens. Howe landed his troops at the head of the Chesapeake Bay and ordered his troops to march north to Philadelphia, which successfully occurred despite skirmishes with General Maxwell’s New Jersey militia. General Washington stationed 12,000 Continental soldiers and 3,000 militiamen at Chad’s Ford in Pennsylvania along the Brandywine River as it was determined that Chad’s Ford was the easiest place to cross the Brandywine River en route to Philadelphia. Washington spread out his soldiers for five miles surrounding the central location of Chad’s Ford. Washington took no reconnaissance of the area and ultimately the Americans did not know all the crossing points in the area. This is a common pattern of Washington’s pre-battle arrangements; for as we will see he would fail to properly scout the terrain of the Monmouth battlefield. In comparison, the British leaders sought out local Loyalists to educate them on the terrain and possible places to cross the river.  

Howe split his army in two columns; one under the command of Hessian General Wilhelm Knyphausen and one under the command of British General Charles Cornwallis. Knyphausen’s troops were ordered to attack and hold the Continental Army at Chad’s Ford as a diversion for the movement of the main body of the British Army. Knyphausen’s troops were almost instantly detected by General Maxwell’s militia and the Americans began to engage in their usual fighting style of shooting and then hiding behind cover. It took nearly five hours for

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the Hessians to reach Chad’s Ford, at the expense fifty percent casualties. General Cornwallis’s troops, under the close supervision of General Howe, crossed the Brandywine River north of General Washington’s troops and marched south to flank the Continental Army. Washington ignored the intelligence, in fact the general laughed as he disbelieved the initial information. The American intelligence did fully not confirm the British movements until two o’clock. When the reports were confirmed, Washington sent Generals Stirling and Stephen to block Cornwallis’ flanking maneuver. A fierce close range battle ensued when the two armies met on Osborn Hill and Birmingham Hill. Stirling and Stephen’s troops, most with one or two years of experience, executed organized attacks on the 8,500 British troops. The British column was twice the size of Stirling and Stephen’s detachment. Generals Washington and Greene were able to supply reinforcements, yet the Continental soldiers were eventually pushed back. Generals Maxwell and Greene had to defend Chad’s Ford with depleted forces, and were overtaken by the exhausted troops of Knyphausen. As night fell, Washington’s army was once again able to avoid capture by the British army as it successfully retreated from the stronger British force. The Continental Army had lost 1,100 men while the British Army had lost about 500 men.\(^\text{10}\)

The American retreat during the battle at Brandywine avoided a possible surrender or capture, yet it allowed the British Army to easily capture the city of Philadelphia. Despite the seizure of Philadelphia, General Washington continued to fight the British Army rather than set up winter quarters. He perceived a weakness in the British Army due to Howe’s decision to divide his troops between Philadelphia and Germantown, Pennsylvania, five miles outside of the city. An attack on Germantown could potentially have brought an end to the American Revolution if Washington was successful in his attempt to capture Howe’s troops. Washington divided his troops into four columns, the militia columns on the left and right with the center two

\(^{10}\) Ferling, *Almost A Miracle*, 247-248.
columns led by Stirling and Greene. The weather greatly affected the battle’s outcome, similar to its role it would have in the battle of Monmouth. There was a heavy fog throughout the battle, drastically limiting the vision of the attacking American forces. Stirling’s troops were the first to encounter British soldiers outside Germantown and it took a massive effort to drive the British advance soldiers back into Germantown. At this point, the British fortified a stone house called “The Cliveden” and the impromptu fort proved to be impossible to capture despite the barrage of American artillery and numerous bayonet charges. By the time Washington ordered his troops to move on, the British had regrouped and stopped the American attack. Washington ordered a general withdrawal of his troops, and they retreated under the cover of General Anthony Wayne’s artillery. The British Army started to fortify the Delaware River, after the battle of Germantown, and destroyed or captured the Continental Army’s forts on the river. The Germantown defeat brought an end to a horrific year for Washington’s troops, as they had lost two major battles, Philadelphia was occupied by the British Army, and the Second Continental Congress was in exile.\footnote{Joseph B Mitchell, Decisive Battles of the American Revolution. (Westholme Publishing, 2004), 117-123.; Lengel, General George Washington, 262.}

Following his defeat at Germantown, General Washington decided to forgo any future major battles with the British and set up camp for the winter. There were numerous sites discussed as a winter camp. The American leadership decided Wilmington, Delaware was located too far south to be effective if the British Army marched through New Jersey. Another favored location was Trenton, New Jersey, but that site would have been constantly bombarded by the British naval force anchored in the Delaware River. Washington decided to set up winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. This location was close enough to the British troops in Philadelphia to harass them on a daily basis, but it was far enough away to secure the American
troops from an unexpected British cavalry attack. Valley Forge enabled the Continental Army to be ready to follow the British Army in any direction it chose to pursue a campaign.\textsuperscript{12}

The American soldiers miraculously survived the winter despite freezing temperatures, malnourishment, and a general lack of proper clothing. Some of the men were forced to walk barefoot through camp to get water and wore hats on their feet to keep them warm during sentry duty. Washington wrote to the Continental Congress complaining that the “mode of providing [clothing] in practice was by no means adequate…unless our future efforts are more effectual, it will be next to impossible to keep an army in the field”. Despite the horrendous conditions, the patriot men, as a whole, remained in a good mood. They dealt with their struggles with humor; the men hosted dinner parties in which only men without pants were invited. A French observer in camp described the army as “so ragged, yet so merry”. Their respect for Washington increased immensely as they saw him in camp each day, despite the horrid conditions. The men rallied around Washington during the battle of Monmouth due to the respect he earned during the winter at Valley Forge.\textsuperscript{13}

General Friedrich Von Steuben, a Prussian military officer who joined the Continental Army on February 5, 1778, devised a training program to instill the necessary discipline for the Continental Army to stand against the British Army on the battlefield. Such discipline would allow the Continental soldiers to successfully withstand several British attacks at Monmouth, without retreating while under artillery fire or at the mere sight of the charging British troops. Alexander Hamilton never appreciated the importance of von Steuben’s boring and monotonous training sessions, until he saw the new army’s discipline on the battlefield at Monmouth. While the troops were drilling incessantly, General Nathanael Greene was assigned the post of

Quartermaster General with the clear understanding from Washington that Greene would be able to command in the field as well. This design is especially important because Greene procured essential uniforms for the majority of the Continental Army and would later execute the flanking artillery strategy that gave the patriots control of the Battle of Monmouth. Washington kept the Continental Army at Valley Forge until General Clinton’s 1778 campaign strategy was known, thus allowing von Steuben valuable training time before the inevitable battle.  

Although Howe was victorious at Brandywine and Germantown and successfully captured the city of Philadelphia, the British government sought his resignation. Lord George Germain, the British Secretary of State for the American Department, placed the blame for General Burgoyne’s defeat and surrender at Saratoga on the shoulders of Howe, who had failed to provide reinforcements. Germain found further fault in Howe for starting the Philadelphia campaign too late, for failing to attack the New England coast, and for not attacking the American colonists aggressively. These attacks on General Howe’s strategy were intended to force Howe to resign and allow the appointment of a commander who would transform the trepid war into an aggressive, offensive war. In response to Germain’s evaluation of the British Army’s strategy, Howe requested he be relieved of his duties in the American colonies at the end of the 1777 campaign.

General Henry Clinton was promoted to succeed General Howe as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in North America on April 13th, 1778 and arrived in Philadelphia on May 8th. Clinton was born into an elite family and spent part of his childhood in New York as the son of the governor of New York. Clinton fought in the Seven Years’ War in Germany as an aide-de-


As the American Revolution was beginning in 1775, Clinton was sent, along with Burgoyne and William Howe, to reinforce General Gage in Boston. Clinton was put in charge of reconnaissance of the American colonists and of planning strategies of attack. In the fall of 1775, Clinton was sent to the southern colonies, where he led a failed attempt to capture Fort Sullivan at the mouth of the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. In 1776, General Clinton returned to New York City as the commander of the city in Howe’s absence during his campaign to capture Philadelphia. Clinton was outspoken against Howe’s decision to abandon General Burgoyne’s troops in order to capture Philadelphia. In Clinton’s mind, the city was not worth the risk of losing Burgoyne’s troops and New York City. Clinton attempted to aid Burgoyne during his struggles at the battles of Freeman’s Farm and Bemis Heights, yet was not able to reach Burgoyne before his surrender.¹⁶

As Commander-in-Chief, Clinton’s command was vastly different than the peaceful negotiation-based strategy of General Howe. General Clinton took a more aggressive approach and yearned to battle with Washington’s troops before he left the Northern Theater. Clinton ordered the evacuation of Philadelphia, the prized conquest of General Howe, to better secure his troops in New York City and potentially tempt General Washington into a large battle as the British marched through New Jersey.¹⁷

General Gates’ victory at Saratoga, along with General Washington’s failures at Brandywine and Germantown increased pressure on the Continental Congress to replace the oft-criticized Commander-in-Chief with Gates. Washington, who was initially nervous about his responsibility to defeat an army of soldiers “who had given their lives to the art and science of war”, did not have many successes in the early years of the American Revolution and was seen

¹⁶ Ibid
by some as an inept military leader. General Thomas Conway was a major supporter of promoting General Gates and sent a congratulatory letter to Gates following Burgoyne’s surrender which stated, “Heaven has determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counselors would have ruined it”. This line praised Gates as well as insulted Washington as a “weak general”. Another outspoken critic of General Washington was the Continental Army’s Surgeon General, Dr. Benjamin Rush. Rush wrote a letter to Patrick Henry, at the time Governor of Virginia, urging Henry to persuade the Continental Congress to relieve Washington of his duties and promote Gates. Washington was alerted of these criticisms when Conway’s letter to Gates was intercepted and brought to Washington’s headquarters. These criticisms presumably weighed heavily on Washington, who was very insecure, self-aware of his inferior background, and extremely sensitive to criticism ever since his childhood. Washington’s yearning to prove himself potentially had a large influence as he contemplated the American course of action in response to General Clinton’s evacuation of Philadelphia and retreat through New Jersey. Washington decided to ignore the opposing views of several of his high ranking generals and ordered the attack on Clinton’s army when the opportunity arose on June 28, 1778 in Monmouth, New Jersey, in an attempt to gain his signature victory to counter Gates’ victory at Saratoga.\(^\text{18}\)

The capture of General Burgoyne’s troops had given France the confidence in the Continental Army to begin alliance negotiations with the Second Continental Congress. On February 6, 1778, France officially allied with American in its war for independence against England in the Treaty of Alliance. The treaty was balanced between the two nations, as if they were of equal power and equally needed the alliance. France pledged to send a fleet of twelve men-of-war and four frigates to aid the Continental Army, which neutralized the British naval

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strength. France’s entrance into the American Revolution provided a great morale boost for the patriot forces. General Washington wrote that the American-France alliance was the “most interesting and most important intelligence” he had received and the treaty placed “Britain in a greater ferment than she ever was since the revolution”. The news was met with heartfelt joy by the soldiers in Valley Forge, with some observing the never-before-seen delight on General Washington’s face.\(^{19}\)

The introduction of the French into the Revolution transformed the war into a global struggle to be fought across the extensive colonial empires of both England and France. England quickly shifted its troops to secure its colonies throughout the world, specifically in the West Indies. On March 21, 1778, General Clinton was ordered to send 5,000 men to the West Indies and 3,000 men to West Florida to defend the areas from expected French attacks. This loss of almost one third of his troops greatly affected his manpower for the impending march across New Jersey and the Battle of Monmouth. The British leaders decided to attack the southern colonies in hopes that it would “lead to the entire reduction of all colonies to the southward of Susquehannah”. The British hoped to rally the southern Tories to fight to reclaim the southern colonies for the British crown. The relocation of the British troops influenced the decision to end the military campaign in the Mid-Atlantic and New England colonies. As the winter of 1777-1778 came to an end, Washington’s troops were located in Valley Forge, PA, a short distance from Clinton’s troops stationed in Philadelphia, PA, and twelve French naval ships had embarked on their mission to aid the Continental Army in America.\(^{20}\)

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It is necessary to understand the events of 1777 and early 1778 in order to gain a deeper knowledge of the British Army’s 1778 march through New Jersey and of the battle of Monmouth. The background information paints a picture of Washington’s military strategies, attitudes, and temperament. Washington, an insecure person since his childhood, pursued his own trademark victory after General Gates’ victory at Saratoga and the culminating calls for him to take the position of Commander-in-Chief. The battles of 1777 show American and British military patterns that were seen at the battle of Monmouth as well. At Brandywine, Washington failed to order a full reconnaissance of the battle area whereas General Howe surveyed the land and was able to discover a key river crossing point to gain victory. At Monmouth, Washington and his generals failed to survey the terrain, while General Clinton investigated the land in order to discover the risks and rewards of the three ravines. Throughout his military career, from the Braddock expedition to the battle of Monmouth, Washington was able to bring organization and leadership to chaotic retreats. In order to analyze Washington’s actions during the battle of Monmouth, it is necessary to have knowledge of his personality and his military successes and failures.

The battles in 1776 and 1777 impacted the military strategies and positions of the Continental and British Armies. The battle at Brandywine allowed General Howe’s British troops to capture the city of Philadelphia; an occupation that was solidified following the battle at Germantown. After his defeat at Germantown, Washington set up winter camp in Valley Forge and waited until the next spring to engage the British Army with the entirety of his troops. Gates’ victory at Saratoga in 1776 threatened the British Army’s occupation of Philadelphia in 1777-1778 because it convinced France entered the war on the side of the Continental Army in

February 1777. The British troops in Philadelphia were at risk of being blockaded by the powerful French naval fleet. The knowledge of previous American Revolution battles is important to the study of the battle of Monmouth because the battles of Brandywine and Germantown cemented the armies’ locations prior to the evacuation of Philadelphia and the battle of Saratoga, which brought the French into the war, created the impetus that forced the British leaders to abandon Philadelphia.
Chapter II: The Road to Monmouth

France’s entrance into the war, specifically its naval force, increased the danger of a blockade on the British troops in the city of Philadelphia. The impending threat of a French blockade and the new military strategy of fighting in the southern colonies mandated the British abandonment of Philadelphia. The French naval force influenced General Clinton’s decision to march overland to New York City. Fearing the risk of a naval battle with the French fleet, Clinton decided to avoid the numerous boat trips it would take to sail the British troops, their supplies, and their loyalist followers to New York City. The decision to evacuate Philadelphia was met with opposition from such high-ranking officers as General Cornwallis, who attempted to resign because “he did not choose to serve in a theater where ‘no offensive operations can be taken”’. The crown refused to accept Cornwallis’ resignation. This decision was exceptionally influential in the Battle of Monmouth, during which Cornwallis led numerous offensive attacks on the Continental Army.²¹

The Continental Army leaders were aware of potential British Army movements from Philadelphia and on May 18, General Lafayette was sent on a reconnaissance expedition to gather intelligence on the potential destinations of the British Army. The expedition party was comprised of 2,500 men and eight cannons. Lafayette’s troops stationed themselves atop Barren Hill, overlooking Philadelphia. On the night of May 19, General Howe sent General Grant with 5,300 troops to capture Lafayette’s troops and personally led an additional 5,700 towards Barren Hill on the morning of May 20, with the promise of bringing Lafayette back to dine with him in the evening. As foreshadowing to the events at the battle of Monmouth, Lafayette’s troops displayed great discipline and intelligence during their retreat from the ensuing British attack.

The British leaders thought there were only two ways up to Barren Hill, whereas Lafayette had scouted a third potential trail that was used to evade the unsuspecting British Army. The Barren Hill expedition gave Washington important intelligence about the pace of the British movements outside of Philadelphia. The expedition is more important for the discipline shown by the Continental troops. The soldiers calmly and obediently followed their orders and narrowly avoided an attack by a British detachment that doubled the size of the Continental expedition party. These same traits would be used to gain victory, a month later, at the battle of Monmouth.²²

General Clinton began the evacuation of Philadelphia on June 15 at Cooper’s Ferry and the last troops safely crossed the Delaware on June 17. There were two route options for the march through New Jersey: travel to New Brunswick and sail to Staten Island or march to Sandy Hook and sail to New York City. The route decision was postponed until the absolutely last moment, so Clinton could be flexible in response to Washington’s anticipated attack. While cognizant of an attack, Clinton had to protect a wagon train that stretched for twelve miles, consisting of: “troops, artillery, provisions train, baggage, numerous private carriages, bakeries, laundries and blacksmiths’ shops on wheels, large hospital supplies, boats, bridges, magazines… a crowd of female camp followers and ‘every kind of useless stuff’”. The wagon train was comprised of 1,500 wagons and protected by 15,000 soldiers.²³

The lengthy wagon train, with its unnecessary supplies, would have moved with decent efficiency had it not been for the unmanageable weather throughout the march. There is a saying

²² Lengel, General George Washington, 288.; Martin, A Narrative Story of a Revolutionary Soldier, 103-104.

about New Jersey weather, “If you don’t like the weather in New Jersey, just wait five minutes and it will change”. This phrase was especially true of Clinton’s march through New Jersey as the weather would alternate between downpours of rain and excessive heat often climbing above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The route taken by the British was along a sandy road that immensely slowed down the wagons. When it was dry and hot, the wagons had to be pushed through the sand and when it rained, the wagons had to be pushed through the mud. The Hessians suffered the most under the natural conditions of the march. Despite the large wagon train, the Hessians were not allowed wagons to transport their extremely fatigued men. Frequently during the march, many Hessians fell along the road and were forced to ride the officers’ horses, due to the lack of wagons. According to one Hessian soldier, almost half of his fellow soldiers fell dead due to the heat during the march on June 25. This was half of the Hessian troops that had already been decimated by desertion throughout the march. On June 26, a Hessian soldier gave thanks to God in his diary that it was the last day of marching because Clinton gave his men a day’s rest on June 27. The weather broke the men, physically and mentally, leaving them unprepared for a battle with Washington’s Continental Army.  

General Clinton’s troops completed their evacuation of Philadelphia on June 17th and marched nearly ten miles to Haddonfield, where they camped for the night. Washington was cognizant of the British evacuation based on intelligence from prisoners who tunneled out of Philadelphia days before the evacuation and from Lafayette’s Barren Hill Expedition. On June 18th, the Jaegers led the march followed by the Hessians, provision wagons, British Regulars, the light infantry, Rangers, and provincial soldiers. According to Johann Ewald, a Hessian soldier, 

the Continental Army attacked the rear guard as soon as the march began. Many British and Hessian soldiers lost their lives this day due to “the intense heat, and due to the sandy ground which [they] crossed through a pathless brushwood where no water was to be found on the entire march”. The British army camped at Moore’s Creek, present-day Pennsauken Creek, for the night. June 19th was a calm day as the British army marched approximately twelve miles to Belly Bridge Creek in Fostertown, present-day Lumberton. American Generals William Maxwell, who led four New Jersey regiments of the Continental Army, and Philemon Dickinson, who led the New Jersey militia, skirmished with the front and flanks of the British wagon train throughout the day of June 20th, as the British army marched to Mount Holly.\(^{25}\)

General Clinton’s army was joined by General Knyphausen’s troops on June 21st. The British were able to enjoy quiet days of march on June 21st and June 22nd because during these two days, the Continental Army crossed the Delaware River, at Coryell’s Ferry. After the successful crossing, Washington ordered his troops to leave behind their tents and heavy baggage in order to move faster in pursuit of the British Army. The quiet came to an end, however, on

June 23rd with a larger than usual skirmish between the American militia and the British troops at the Crosswicks bridge. The New Jersey militia stood guard at the drawbridge and had previously taken out all of the floor boards in the structure. The militia had also chopped down trees to act as further obstacles for the British army. The creek was passable for the troops, but impassable for artillery. The militia was pushed across the creek by an advance party of the British Army, and with the support of artillery fire, the British engineers were able to repair the bridge. Swiftly following the repair of the bridge, the First battalion of the British infantry pursued the militia for a distance until falling back to the main troops of the British Army. Four British soldiers were severely wounded in this small fight. Following the skirmish, the British army camped just beyond Crosswicks. The difficulty to move artillery over hilly and marshy land is an important theme found in both the skirmish at Crosswicks and the battle of Monmouth. Following the skirmish, the British army camped at Allentown on June 24.26

On June 25th, Clinton decided to take the eastern route and march his troops to Sandy Hook and sail to New York City rather than march to New Brunswick and sail from there to New York City. Clinton might have hoped to avoid the Continental Army, which was camped in the western part of New Jersey. The British knew the Continental Army was traveling light, especially in comparison to the slow plodding 1,500 wagon train of the British Army, an army that was further slowed by the American rebels’ harassment and the continuously changing intense heat and rain. However, the more plausible interpretation of the route decision is that Clinton wanted a battle with Washington. According to Clinton’s account, he chose the Sandy Hook route due to the possibility of luring Washington away from the hilly region of Valley Forge to give Clinton the opportunity to get “a fair stroke at him [Washington]” before Clinton

took leave from the region. Clinton additionally mentioned the change of route would place Washington’s troops behind the British wagon train, which was guarded by the elite troops marching between the baggage and the Continental Army. Further proof for this interpretation can be found in Clinton’s decision to rest his men on June 27th at Monmouth Court House. The British Army could have marched sixteen miles and rested at the more easily protected high lands of Middletown rather than remaining in the relatively flat farm land of Monmouth. Instead, Clinton used the rest day on June 27th to further reconnoiter the local area in case Washington attacked the baggage train before it reached the high-ground, defensive stronghold of Middletown. Clinton believed his British troops were superior to the Continental Army, despite the colonists’ superior numbers and native knowledge of the area. He yearned for the chance to end the war with a defeat of Washington before the British Army was transferred to the southern colonies. The June 25th decision to march towards Sandy Hook should be seen as a successful attempt by Clinton to lure Washington’s troops down from its winter quarters in the hilly western region of New Jersey and initiate a battle with the British Army on flat ground, which was a more advantageous battlefield terrain for Clinton’s troops.27

Unbeknownst to Clinton, Washington had kept his men at the rear of the British wagon train rather than attempt a flanking maneuver because he wanted to give the American citizens the impression of the British Army fleeing before the “triumphant” Continental Army. The image of the British Army retreating as the Continental Army chased it across New Jersey was immensely important to the propaganda movements to further increase civilian aid, in the form of militia enlistments and supplies, to the side of the Continental Army and drastically raised morale within the army. Joseph Martin, a private in the Continental Army, wrote of a crowd of

27 Clinton, The American Rebellion, quote at 89.; Ewald, Diary of the American Revolution, 135.
“patriotic inhabitants” in Princeton that assembled to cheer the American soldiers and hand out food for their pursuit of the British Army.28

Throughout the entire march, but especially on June 26th, the Jaegers suffered the most because they were responsible for securing the rear guard of the baggage train which was the area the Continental Army attacked on a daily basis. A Hessian soldier, named Jacob Piel, recorded that a large percentage of Hessian soldiers had deserted between June 20th and June 24th. The Hessians were forced to repel militia attacks on the rear of the wagon train for the entire day on the 25th, during which Piel reported nearly half of the troops fell due to the heat. June 26th was the worst day of fighting before the Battle of Monmouth. The British soldiers were affected by the extreme heat from the beginning of the march and shortly after leaving camp on the 26th, the Hessians had to defend against unrelenting Continental Army and New Jersey militia attacks on the rear guard. In the words of one Hessian soldier, “Due to the unbearable heat…the march was very tiring…and because of the exhausted and ruined wells, [we] suffered severely from the shortage of water; many of the Jaegers fell on the road…This happened frequently on the retreat across the Jerseys.”29 Ewald’s troops were attacked by the patriot soldiers on the flanks before daybreak and at points in the attacks, the British light infantry dropped back to offer reinforcements. The Continental soldiers continued the attack until the British army stopped to make camp. In the course of the day, according to Ewald’s diary, over two hundred British and Hessian soldiers were lost, with 60 out of a total of 180

29 Burgoyne, Enemy Views, 263-266.
Hessian foot soldiers and 30 horsemen dead, with twenty of those deaths resulting from the intense heat and subsequent fatigue.\textsuperscript{30}

The British army camped at Monmouth Court House and remained there on June 27\textsuperscript{th} to allow the exhausted soldiers to rest. Five miles to the northwest in Englishtown, the Continental Army awaited its orders for the upcoming battle. In ten days, Clinton’s army had marched sixty miles from Philadelphia to Monmouth Court House. Generals William Maxwell and Philemon Dickinson’s Continental soldiers and militiamen destroyed nearly every bridge along the British Army’s route, which forced Clinton’s troops to stop at every river in order to fix the bridge or wade across the river. The British Army suffered greatly due to the intense heat that topped 100 degrees daily, the lack of water, and the constant harassment by the Continental Army and the New Jersey militia.\textsuperscript{31}

The British soldiers were affected more by the heat than the colonists due to their heavy uniforms and packs. The design of the uniforms placed more importance on the attractiveness rather than the practicality of the uniforms. The soldiers wore brimless hats that failed to protect from sun or rain, a roller around the neck that cut off blood circulation, a heavy coat that limited movement more than it protected from the cold, and leggings that impeded movement and caused foot swellings during long marches. The British uniforms became even more unyielding during the summer months. They were made of heavy wool and canvas, with buffalo-hide shoulder and waist belts which held an additional eleven pounds to further exhaust and heat the soldiers. In addition to the high numbers of cases of heatstroke during the 1778 march, there was a common ailment called “‘prickling heat rash’” that annoyed soldiers. During the battle of Monmouth, the British soldiers had to deal with temperatures over one hundred degrees while

\textsuperscript{30} Ewald, \textit{Diary of the American Revolution}, 135.
dressed in wool uniforms and carrying sixty-pound packs. In comparison, Washington ordered his troops to leave their packs in camp and to travel with only two days rations. During the battle of Monmouth, the Continental soldiers stripped off excess clothing, with some soldiers stripped down to just their pants, in order to combat the intense heat. The Continental Army adapted better to the environment in its practice of wearing the appropriate amount of clothing, excluding the several unbearable winter camps, while the British Army was more concerned with its appearance than its ability to functionally adapt to the hot temperatures.\(^{32}\)

The march through New Jersey demonstrated the transformed allegiances of the residents in New Jersey. In 1776, Howe had marched through New Jersey en route to Philadelphia and was met by hundreds of loyalists who wished to sign loyalty oaths, while the New Jersey militia and residents fled the British Army. In 1778, however, the public support had switched from the British Army to the Continental Army, and Clinton could not use loyalist supporters of years past to safely reach New York City. A large percentage of New Jersey citizens were fully committed to helping the Continental Army defeat the British Army. Many men joined the militia while others hid their livestock in swamps and poured sand into wells to keep food and water away from the British soldiers. The residents also provided information on the British movements. The British were aware of the lack of loyalty among the New Jersey residents and Clinton tried to travel through New Jersey as fast as possible; he carried no loyalty oaths to recruit new support. The 1778 march through New Jersey was a crucial momentum swing for the American states as it showed the full extent that its residents had shifted from to active hostility towards the British Army.\(^{33}\)


The British Army abandoned the city of Philadelphia in fear of the French naval force, yet it had to suffer through unforeseen obstacles throughout its march. General Dickinson’s New Jersey militia and General Maxwell’s Continental Army regiments wreaked havoc on the British Army’s massive wagon train through the destruction of bridges and drinking wells. Maxwell and Dickinson also engaged in constant annoyance of the British Army by ambush attacks from concealed militia men. Historian Michael Stephenson described the British Army as “a great shaggy bear heading off to its lair with its shanks being constantly nipped and worried by patriot skirmishers that the beast would occasionally and ineffectively try to swat”. The weather, however, created the most suffering for the British soldiers. The British soldiers fell dead to heat stroke and thirst brought about by the intense heat. Alternately, the soldiers were exhausted by the prevalent torrential rain storms, which soaked the sand paths and made it extremely difficult to move the 1,500 wagons in the wagon train. The militia harassment and the exceptionally difficult weather conditions left the British Army exhausted and physically unprepared to face the Continental Army.  

Chapter III: The Morning of June 28, 1778

The armies of General Washington and General Clinton met on the battlefield of Monmouth Court House, New Jersey on June 28, 1778. The battle took place in present-day Freehold, NJ. Monmouth Court House was nearly sixty miles from Philadelphia (the site of the start of the British march), twenty miles from Sandy Hook (the site the British were marching to in order to sail to New York City), and twenty-eight miles via land and water from New York City (the end destination of the British march). The battlefield encompassed more than 1,450 acres. Three ravines cut by streams and three morasses split up the farm land and proved exceptionally consequential to the outcome of the battle as they hindered artillery movement. Throughout this paper, the ravines will be noted as the West Ravine, the Middle Ravine, and the East Ravine. There were only narrow bridges available for crossing each ravine, which made retreat a formidable task. The farm fields were comprised of rolling hills, with several round tops dispersed along the edges of the battlefield. The two most important round tops were Combs Hill on the south side of the battlefield and Perrine Ridge in the northeastern corner of the battlefield. Forests lined the fields and orchards were located throughout the eastern farmland.35

The roads through Monmouth Court House were comprised of the sandy mud mixture the British Army had been marching through since its evacuation of Philadelphia. The British soldiers’ feet were scorched through their shoes from the hot sand during their five mile march back to the battlefield. The sand paths added to the British soldiers exhaustion and suffering following a week of tough marching, but the greatest environmental detriment to both armies was the extreme heat. The temperature was between eighty and ninety degrees at seven o’clock

in the morning and reached 107 degrees in the afternoon. Even trees offered little shelter from the heat as Cornwallis reported that it was ninety-six degrees in the shade. The heat was described by Lieutenant Hale as “scarcely to be conceived in Europe”. To add to the soldiers’ suffering, there was only one water spring on the battlefield, in the northern woods, to provide water to the thousands of soldiers on the battlefield. American women, including the famous Molly Hayes who inspired the Molly Pitcher legend, made continuous trips to the spring in order to keep the Continental soldiers minimally hydrated. Some soldiers were so thirsty that upon procuring water, they drank exorbitant amounts and died from burst intestines. The thirst was so awful for the British soldiers that many sat in the shade of trees that were in the direct line of the American artillery. These soldiers risked dying by cannon shot rather than have to suffer any longer from thirst and the heat.\footnote{Wickwire, 	extit{Cornwallis}, 111.; Captain GH Wilkin, ed., 	extit{Some British Soldiers in America} (Hugh Rees Ltd: London, 1914), 256-260 (found on JSTOR).}

On June 24\textsuperscript{th}, General Washington called a Council of War with fifteen of his generals to determine a course of action as the British Army marched across New Jersey. At this point in the march, it was clear that General Clinton was leading his troops to Sandy Hook, where they would embark on ships to New York City. Washington told his generals the British Army had 9,000-10,000 soldiers fit for duty whereas the Continental Army had 10,600 soldiers fit for duty along with 1,200 militiamen. General Washington requested his generals’ opinions on the Continental Army’s course of action based on the current situation. General Nathanael Greene was very supportive of an attack on the British Army, as he stated, “If we suffer the enemy to pass through the Jerseys without attempting anything upon them, I think we shall ever regret it…We have come with great rapidity and we got near the Enemy and then our courage failed us and we halted without attempting to do the enemy the least injury.” Generals Lafayette, Wayne,
and von Steuben agreed with Greene and in Lafayette’s words, “it would be disgraceful and humiliating to allow the enemy to cross the Jerseys in tranquility.” The three generals wanted to send a large force to harass the British Army, with the full Continental Army marching at a safe distance away in case it was needed to reinforce the harassing force. Other generals, however, wanted to wait for the French support before engaging with the British troops. General Charles Lee felt the Continental Army had a better chance of gaining independence if it waited for the French Army and Navy than through any action of its own. Furthermore, Lee argued that even a small-scale engagement would likely transform into a full-scale engagement since the British Army was prepared to fight and destroy Washington’s army.37

General Washington decided to compromise. He would add 1,500 men to the current force harassing the left and rear flanks of the British Army and ordered the force to give the British Army “every degree of annoyance”. It must not be forgotten that General Washington faced criticism following General Gates’ victory at Saratoga. It can safely be assumed that Washington yearned for his own signature battle victory and that victory was extremely close as the British Army marched through New Jersey, within miles of the Continental Army. Initially, General Lee rejected the offer to be in charge of the mission to reinforce the troops harassing the British Army due to its minimal size, so General Lafayette was placed in charge of the force. Yet after General Washington increased the reinforcements to 5,000 soldiers, General Lee successfully requested the command of the significantly larger force. After the change in command, the general who was the most outspoken on avoiding battle with the British Army was given command of the force and ambiguously ordered to attack the British Army.38

38 Showman, The Papers of Nathanael Greene, vol. 2, 444-447.; Stryker, The Battle of Monmouth, 77-
General Lee called for a meeting with his supporting generals on the evening of June 27th, yet a battle plan was never discussed for the following day’s engagement. Lee explained that a strategy could not be created because he was unfamiliar with the terrain, the enemy’s strength, and their location. The general's only recommendation to his generals was to not dispute rank or the order of the march into battle. Lee, who was imprisoned for all of 1777, was also not familiar with his supporting generals due to his lengthy absence from the Continental Army. On the evening before one of the major battles of the American Revolution, the Continental Army did not have a battle strategy due to its failure to properly arrange reconnaissance on the proposed battlefield’s terrain. Lee’s unpreparedness affected the Continental Army’s march towards the British Army because he halted his troops twice, initially for an hour and then for an additional half hour break, in order to gain knowledge of the terrain and the British troops. These breaks in marching gave the British Army additional crucial time to march away from the Americans, while further preparing for battle.\[39\]

General Clinton was aware of Washington’s previous disposition to avoid general engagements, and thought Washington was after the British baggage rather than the British Army as a whole. Clinton believed that Washington would have never attempted an attack over the difficult terrain, specifically the three ravines, found in Monmouth. As his troops were resting on June 27th, Clinton discovered the land around him was comprised of marsh lands that could only be crossed via narrow bridges. He wrote in his military report:

For I could not entertain so bad an opinion of Mr. Washington’s military abilities as to suppose he would risk his avant garde over those difficult passes without the support of his gross, or that he would even venture to support through such a country.

Since Clinton felt the American attack would occur on the baggage and not over the impossible terrain, he placed General Knyphausen in charge of the head guard of the baggage train. According to Washington’s intelligence report from General Dickinson, Knyphausen was ordered to march out of camp towards Middletown at four o’clock and the rest of the army followed around eight o’clock. General Cornwallis’ troops were placed at the rear of the baggage train to have the British Army’s elite soldiers in between the baggage and the Continental Army. Cornwallis’ troops were the best of the British Army, comprised of the British and Hessian grenadiers, foot soldiers, and the British cavalry. Clinton stayed back with Cornwallis’ troops to command the elite troops in the case of an attack. General Clinton was especially fearful of an attack on the British supplies because he thought General Gates’ northern army was with Washington, which would have given the Continental Army 20,000 troops at Monmouth.  

General Lee’s forces, comprised of 5,000 soldiers and twelve artillery pieces according to Lee’s adjutant general, began the march at seven o’clock. The order of the march was as follows from front to back: 400 men under the command of Colonels Butler and Jackson, General Scott’s brigade of 600 troops and two artillery pieces, General Varnum’s 600 troops and two artillery pieces, General Wayne’s 1,000 troops and two artillery pieces, General Scott’s detachment of 1,400 men and four artillery pieces, and the rear was brought up by General Maxwell’s 1,000 men and two artillery pieces. These figures do not include the hundreds of militiamen who partook in the fighting. The march was further delayed by the need to gain

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intelligence of the landscape and confusion over the extensive order of the march. As Lee marched towards the British Army he kept his troops in the woods to conceal them from the British scouts. Lee continued to use the woods to hide the artillery throughout the morning skirmishes.  

The first action of the battle occurred between a reconnaissance party under the command of General von Steuben and the Queen’s Rangers, a Loyalist cavalry regiment in the British Army. A little after seven o’clock in the morning, the Loyalists attacked with extra vigor in hopes of capturing the high ranking general. The Queen’s Rangers had twenty horsemen and forty foot soldiers, yet the small patriot reconnaissance party was able to evade capture and successfully reached Colonel Grayson’s regiment of American soldiers. This small skirmish

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42 Bilby and Jenkins, *Monmouth Court House*, 211 (with additions by Kyle Madison).
between an American scouting party and a Loyalist regiment marked the first action of the battle of Monmouth. The skirmish also marked the last action of General von Steuben in the morning portion of the battle. Steuben assumed there would be no battle since the British Army was on the road to Middletown, so he returned to camp in order to nap.43

The first action between the British Army and the Continental Army occurred between the British cavalry and General Wayne’s and Colonel Butler’s troops. General Wayne’s objective was to hold the British rear guard until Lee’s troops could wrap around it to flank its left side. Wayne crossed the East Ravine and viewed around 900 British troops. He ordered Colonel Butler forward to bring about battle with the British troops. The British light dragoons, the cavalry unit, rushed Butler’s troops in an attempt to separate Wayne’s detachment from the rest of the Continental Army, which remained behind the East Ravine. Butler’s troops were able to push back the horsemen due to well placed musket fire. As the cavalry retreated, Wayne ordered Butler to pursue them towards the main contingent of the British Army. As the Continental soldiers came in view of the larger British force, they were met with strong artillery fire. The British force, which numbered close to two thousand soldiers at this point, angled itself towards the high ground on the right flank of Wayne’s troops. Wayne requested more troops to attack the British Army, but discovered the Continental troops behind him had retreated a mile down the road to the town of Monmouth Court House. Wayne wanted to stop the British from gaining the important high ground, yet the lack of possible reinforcements for an attack forced him to retreat.44

The Continental Army’s intelligence was poor during the morning events, as contradicting reports of enemy movement filtered in throughout the course of the morning battle.

43 Bilby and Jenkins, Monmouth Court House, 192.
44 Stryker, The Battle of Monmouth, 133-136.; Bilby and Jenkins, Monmouth Court House, 196-197.; Gilman, Monmouth Road to Glory (Book II: Proceedings of a Court Martial), 23.
In a decision that hurt his army’s intelligence even more, Lee set up a reconnaissance post in an area that did not have a full view of the battlefield while with Lafayette’s troops in the woods on the British’s right flank. He was not able to see the entirety of Cornwallis’ troops. In contrast, Clinton placed his headquarters on Briar Hill where he could see the entire battlefield and both armies’ movements. At one point, Lee even ordered an attack on some troops, only to find out that the troops were Butler’s units and not Clinton’s. Clinton desperately wanted a major victory before he left the northern theater, and victory was within his grasp as Lee’s troops floundered and Washington was too far away to supply reinforcements. Clinton aggressively pressured Wayne in the center and ignored Lafayette on his flank until the time came to deal with those troops. The British Army’s aggressive advance intimidated the Continental troops, who jumped at the slightest hint of a retreat. Wayne was ready for his fight with Clinton’s troops, yet just like Lafayette moments later, Wayne was forced to retreat due to the lack of reinforcements.  

The initial American retreat was judged to be Lee’s fault, in a subsequent court martial decision, yet he was not the cause for the chaotic retreat. There are two possible events that caused the massive retreat. General Oswald’s artillery movement could be seen as the event that sparked the mass retreat. Oswald was supporting Wayne and Butler’s troops but was left unprotected in the open when Butler pushed forward. The reserve artillery supply was on the other side of the Spotswood Middle Brook and the East Ravine. When Oswald ran out of cannon shot he decided he was of no help to Wayne’s troops and disengaged and retreated across the ravine to his supplies. At the same time as Oswald’s retreat, Generals Scott and Maxwell realigned their troops to be better suited to handle the threat of Cornwallis’ advancing troops. The movement shot up a dust cloud from the dry ground and the other patriot troops thought Scott and Maxwell were retreating. Several Continental Army units began to retreat and Scott

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ordered a retreat upon seeing others retreating. Lafayette, still in the woods on the British flank, observed that he no longer had support since the majority of the troops were in retreat. The young marquis, very near an engagement with British troops, pulled his men back and joined the American retreat. The other possible cause of retreat was Lafayette’s previous movement. He was ordered to a position that was later determined to be insufficiently protected, so Lafayette moved his troops to the woods on the British flank. It is thought by some historians that this movement sparked the chain reaction retreat that was previously mentioned as following Oswald’s retrograde movement. At twelve-thirty in the afternoon, Lee ordered a general withdrawal in response to the confusing and disorganized retreat that was already in process.\(^{46}\)

As Washington arrived with reinforcements, he encountered Lee’s retreating troops. Washington questioned a retreating soldier and was told that Lee ordered the retreat. Diarist Private Joseph Plumb Martin wrote that he could not attest to the validity of the words spoken by Washington but the Commander-in-Chief “seemed at the instant to be in a great passion, his looks if not his words seemed to indicate as much”. An aide to Washington, who was ahead of the commander-in-chief, discovered the reason for the retreat was due to the Continental Army’s meeting of columns of the British troops and cavalry; to which he retorted that the objective of the day was to meet the British Army on the field of battle. Washington angrily rode off in search of Lee and upon finding his second in command, he demanded to know “What is all this confusion for and what is the cause of the retreat?” Lee told Washington that he did not feel it was in their best interest to bring about a general action with the British Army. The more publicized story of the meeting has been fueled by rumors reported by non eye-witnesses, including General Lafayette. The person cited most as an eye witness is General Charles Scott,

who reported that Washington “swore till the leaves shook on the trees...he swore like an angel from heaven,” despite the fact that Scott was miles away from the two generals at the time of the interaction.\textsuperscript{47}

Despite these questionable sources, it can be presumed that Washington was furious over Lee’s decision to retreat rather than attack the British. Washington’s pre-battle orders were ambiguous but Generals Wayne and Scott and Lieutenant-Colonels Hamilton and Meade testified they interpreted the orders to mean that Lee was supposed to attack the British at the earliest opportunity. General Clinton also offered his opinion of Lee’s actions in his report to the British Ministry in which he stated, “There will, I fancy, be little doubt after reading both accounts [from Lee’s court martial] that his whole corps would probably have fallen into the power of the King’s army if he had made a stand in front of the first defile, and not retreated with the precipitancy he did”. Following the battle, Lee requested a court martial to be cleared of the charge that he ignored a direct order from Washington. Lee claimed he was acting in the Continental Army’s best interest, as Clinton hinted. The court martial determined that Lee was indeed guilty on the charges of disobedience of orders, misbehavior before the enemy, and disrespect to the commander-in-chief. Given the severity of the charges, there may have been some sympathy for his defense, as he was simply suspended from the Continental Army without pay for a year. After the year, he resigned. The battle of Monmouth was the last battle Lee fought in during his illustrious military career.\textsuperscript{48}

After his confrontation with Lee on the battlefield, Washington had ordered Lee to organize his troops and defend the nearby hedgerow while Washington organized his troops and


\textsuperscript{48} Clinton, \textit{The American Rebellion}, quote at 96; Gilman, \textit{Monmouth Road to Glory (Book II: Proceedings of a General Court Martial)}, 8-10, 238-239.
artillery on farther Perrine Ridge. The artillery had to be moved across the West Ravine. The hedgerow was a fence, most likely a pasture demarcation line, in the middle of the battlefield atop a hill with a morass behind it and with only one bridge to cross it. At this moment in the battle, the hedgerow separated the British Army from the Continental Army. The skirmish that ensued at the hedgerow was the deadliest fighting of the day and quickly dissolved into hand to hand combat.49

Around twelve thirty in the afternoon, Continental Army troops set up their defenses at the hedgerow, with an advance party near the bottom of the hill in order to allow their artillery to shoot over their heads. Colonel Walter Stewart, Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel Ramsay, Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah Olney with two artillery pieces from the units of Colonels Oswald, Livingston, and Jackson were put in charge of the troops defending the hedgerow. The order of the troops, from left to right looking at the hedgerow, was Olney/Oswald’s artillery, Colonel Livingston, Colonel Olney, and Colonel Hamilton. The advance party dropped back to the hedgerow as the British troops, comprised of grenadiers and light troops, advanced.50

Under the command of General Wayne, Ramsay and Stewart’s troops were stationed on the edge of the woods on the northern side of the battlefield on the American right flank. The British Foot Guards attacked these troops at “the point of the woods” and lost nearly forty men. Despite the losses, the Guards launched a successful bayonet charge that sent Wayne’s troops into a retreat towards the main Continental troops at the hedgerow. The British Army swarmed right, into an array of bullets and cannon shot fired by Olney’s troops. Lt. Hale, a British officer, described this charge as “the heaviest fire I have yet felt”. The fight at the hedgerow only lasted

49 Bilby and Jenkins, Monmouth Court House, 206.
50 Stryker, The Battle of Monmouth, 185-187.
Skirmish at the Hedgerow:

five minutes, yet was the turning point of the battle. The Continental Army held the advancing
British Army long enough for Washington to organize both his arriving and retreating troops and
artillery atop Perrine Ridge. The patriot soldiers, according to Private Joseph Martin, were so
eager to fight the British soldiers that their officers had to force them into the retreat since the
soldiers did not want to stop fighting the “invaders of their country”. The Continental soldiers
conducted a disciplined retreat across the narrow bridge over the Spotswood Middle Brook to get
the troops and Olney’s artillery to the safety of the Continental Army atop Perrine Ridge.
General Lee was the last man across the bridge, per his promise to Washington.  

Heat exhaustion and the Continental Army’s placement on a hill were influential in the
British Army’s inability to overtake the hedgerow fast enough to attack Washington’s troops
before they were organized. If the British troops had reached the hedgerow minutes earlier, they

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51 Martin, A Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier, quote at 111.; Bilby and Jenkins, Monmouth Court
would have been able to trap the American troops with their backs against the West Ravine. As with their march through New Jersey, the British Army was slowed by the exhausting heat. Prior to the skirmish at the hedgerow, the British troops marched five miles to the battlefield from the baggage train. The hot sand burned through the soldiers’ shoes, while the sun exacerbated the soldiers’ thirst which could not be quenched due to the British Army’s lack of water. Lt. Hale, in a letter to his parents, hoped to never experience another march of the same quality. The British soldiers were afforded no rest as their march led them up the hill to the bloody, hand-to-hand combat of the hedgerow fighting. The American artillery fired shot after shot at the exhausted troops. The Continental soldiers were able to retreat at a much faster pace than the exhausted British soldiers who were attacking uphill. Hale wrote, “to my unutterable disappointment, they out ran us in a second”. The heat sapped the British soldiers of the energy necessary to overtake the rested Continental Army at the hedgerow atop a hill.  

The leadership on both sides was impeccable during the hedgerow skirmish. Washington was the perfect model of a physically commanding leader. He was six feet three inches tall and very broad shouldered. Washington, riding atop his white horse given to him by the New Jersey Governor William Livingston, ignored the enemy artillery fire as he rode back and forth across Perrine Ridge organizing his troops into their defensive positions. Lafayette spoke highly of Washington after the battle, saying

[Washington] rode along the lines, amid the shouts of these soldiers, cheering them by his voice and example and restoring to our standard the fortunes of the fight. I thought then as now that never had I beheld so superb a man

Washington’s bravery allowed the Continental Army to regroup and prepare for another British attack. Washington’s counterpart also led his troops into battle on horseback. As Clinton led his

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troops towards the hedgerow, he was heard yelling, “Charge Grenadiers never heed forming”. Clinton advanced with his troops until the Americans retreated to Perrine Ridge. Washington and Clinton acted with bravery, however, the best display of courage and heroism by a military leader were Colonel Ramsay’s actions. In the thick of the “point of woods” fighting, Ramsay’s horse was shot out from under him, yet he continued to fight as a dismounted soldier. He was attacked by a British dragoon, but when the British soldier’s pistol misfired, Ramsay knocked the soldier off his horse with a sword. Ramsay mounted the horse, but was subsequently captured by numerous British soldiers. Upon hearing of his courageous exploits, Clinton released him the next day to return to the Continental Army. The leadership of the Continental Army and the British Army heroically led their troops into battle rather than remaining at the rear of the battle.53

The British Army pulled back after the Continental troops retreated to the protection of Perrine Ridge. This marked the ending of the violent action of the morning battle. The morning events followed the usual patterns of the Continental Army’s military engagements. They were at a severe disadvantage because of the failure to correctly survey the battlefield before the battle. There was also a discernable lack of communication between the leaders that led various regiments to act independently and ultimately led to a chaotic, unauthorized retreat. These same problems plagued the Continental Army at the battles of Brandywine and Germantown.

The heat of the day was greatly influential in the swing of momentum towards the Continental Army following the hedgerow fighting. There was a stark disadvantage for the British soldiers in the battle because they were extremely hot in their wool uniforms and underneath their sixty pound packs, exhausted from the several mile march back to the

battlefield, and deathly thirsty from the heat. On the other hand, the Continental soldiers wore loose clothing without any packs and had water available to them due to the heroic actions of women trekking from the springs in the woods to the soldiers on the battlefield. The Continental soldiers were better suited to fight in the extreme heat, with temperatures higher than 100 degrees, and it was influential in their ability to hold back the British troops at the hedgerow. At the end of the back and forth morning events in which the British Army attacked, the Continental Army under Lee retreated, the British Army attacked again, and the Continental Army held their ground, Washington’s troops were securely entrenched on Perrine Ridge and the British Army was vulnerable downhill from Washington.54

Chapter IV: The Continental Army Controls the Battlefield

The morning of June 28, 1778 was filled with back-and-forth battling between the Continental Army and the British Army, with both sides failing to secure a major advantage. General Washington had taken over command of the Continental Army from General Lee. In Clinton’s words, the afternoon artillery battle was caused by the “intolerable heat that neither army could possibly stand”. Washington’s artillery, on Perrine Ridge, provided cover for the

54 Gilman, Monmouth Road to Glory (Book II: Proceedings of a General Court Martial), 10.
troops retreating from the hedgerow and in the afternoon, it would afford the soldiers an opportunity to rest and re-energize. General Clinton also chose to use his artillery to provide cover for his resting troops. The afternoon began with a severe artillery battle and it ended with Washington’s Continental Army in command of the battlefield.  

The Continental Army corrected its previous mistakes and lack of discipline during the afternoon battle, in large part due to Washington’s brilliant leadership. Washington, in contrast with his usual battle behavior, used the intelligence of a local militiaman by the name of Lieutenant Colonel David Rhea. He suggested Perrine Ridge to Washington for two reasons. There was a swamp to the east of the ridge that would eliminate the risk of a British flanking maneuver on the American left side and there were woods behind the ridge that would provide crucial security from the sun for the exhausted soldiers. Washington set up two lines of troops on Perrine Ridge with the protection of artillery and the terrain. These troops were new to the battle and well-rested. Lee’s troops, who had fought all morning, were sent to the rear to act as reserves and with this order, Lee’s military career was over. Shortly after ordering Lee to the rear, Washington’s white horse died from exhaustion after it was pushed to the limit by the heat and Washington’s constant movement in the organization of his troops.

The British Army advanced towards General Stirling’s troops on the American left wing. Stirling’s troops were well rested, in a strong defensive position, and included some of the best drilled veterans in all of the Continental Army. The British soldiers were met with a strong artillery attack by Stirling and did not advance farther than the bottom of the hill. Clinton set up artillery at this location and an artillery battle with Stirling ensued. General Greene described the artillery battle as “a most furious cannonade” and was recorded by another soldier as “the

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severest artillery fire ever heard in America”. The British artillery consisted of six and twelve pounder guns, which means the cannonballs shot from the guns weighed six and twelve pounds respectively. The American artillery only had four and six pound guns. Throughout the artillery exchange Washington, Stirling, and von Steuben, who awoke from his nap at the sound of the artillery, roamed among the troops constantly encouraging them in battle. These three men provided structure and confidence that was absent during the morning events.\(^57\)

The British remained on the offensive during the artillery battle. General Erskine attempted to flank the American troops, yet was forced into retreat by enemy fire, the heat, and impassable terrain. Erskine had two three-pound artillery pieces and wanted to connect with the Queen’s Rangers in order to turn the American flank. Erskine’s troops met severe artillery fire from Perrine Ridge and lost a few men to the debilitating heat. These events and the difficult marshy terrain proved successful in deterring the British attack. If Erskine had persevered through the difficult conditions, his troops would have met the reserve line of Continental soldiers under the command of Lafayette. Erskine pulled his troops back to rest and trained more artillery fire on Perrine Ridge.\(^58\)

American troops pursued the right wing of the British Army as they retreated from Stirling’s artillery. In an attempt to escape the artillery fire and the heat that was described as “almost too hot to live in”, the British soldiers were resting under the trees in an orchard. The Continental troops were led by Colonel Joseph Cilley and the events were recorded by Private Joseph Martin. Cilley’s troops numbered about five hundred soldiers. The American soldiers used bushes to conceal themselves as they approached the resting British soldiers. These British soldiers retreated in disorder towards the main army upon spotting Cilley’s troops. A small


Continental detachment was ordered to pursue the enemy and delay them until the full support of Cilley’s troops arrived. Martin observed numerous British soldiers on the ground that had been killed by the American artillery. By the time Cilley’s troops caught up with the British, the enemy soldiers had successfully retreated to the protection of the main British Army, which occupied a much higher ground than Cilley. The skirmish between Cilley and the British ended at this point and the American soldiers laid down for a much needed rest in the shade.59

The small scale fighting between Col. Cilley’s Continental troops and the British detachment is an exceptional example of the Americans’ efficient use of the environment. Cilley chose to attack the enemy when the British soldiers, debilitated by the heat, were resting in the shade of an orchard. The American soldiers were somewhat rested after spending time in the shade of the woods by Perrine Ridge and hence were better suited for a fight than the British. Cilley’s troops continued to use the terrain to their advantage by hiding behind bushes in order to sneak up on the resting British soldiers. The Continental soldiers’ abilities to fight offensively in the intense heat and incorporate the terrain into their battle strategy led to their successful push of the British soldiers away from the Continental Army’s left wing on Perrine Ridge.

Out of the afternoon artillery battle came the legend of Molly Pitcher. Throughout the course of the battle, American women brought water to the Continental soldiers from a spring in the woods near Perrine Ridge. This was one major advantage for the Continental Army because they were supplied, albeit with a limited supply, with water during the battle whereas the British soldiers had no additional water supply besides their canteens. The legend of Molly Pitcher tells of an artilleryman’s wife, who carried water to the men of her husband’s unit. Her husband was killed during the artillery battle and the woman quickly took over her husband’s role to ensure

59 Martin, A Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier, 112-114. quote at 112.; Bilby and Jenkins, Monmouth Court House, 216-217.
the artillery unit could continue fighting. It cannot be determined if “Molly Pitcher” was indeed a real woman or a combination of several women. Some historians believe Molly Hayes was the real life Molly Pitcher, while others believe the legend is several anecdotes put together into one myth. Joseph Martin recorded an incident in which a woman, possibly the inspiration for Molly Pitcher, was helping her husband at an artillery piece and had a cannonball shoot “directly between her legs without doing any other damage than carrying away all the lower part of her petticoat”. The validity of “Molly Pitcher” is of less importance than the fact that women fought alongside and aided the Continental Army. These women were crucial to the outcome of the battle for their ability to supply water to the extremely exhausted and thirsty Continental soldiers, while the British soldiers received only the limited amount of water in their canteens.60

60 Martin, A Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier, quote at 115.; Stryker, The Battle of Monmouth, 189-192.
During the artillery battle, Washington ended his habit of not listening to local intelligence and secured an advantage by listening to a local militiaman, Lt. Col. Rhea. He suggested Combs Hill as a favorable spot for artillery. Combs Hill, pictured above, was on the southern side of the battlefield and at a near right angle with Perrine Ridge. It was protected by a marsh in front of the hill that would slow down any invasion attempt. The Continental Army would be able to trap the British Army in the middle of the battlefield with artillery fire from the west and the south. Greene used the respite caused by the artillery battle to personally scout Combs Hill and decided it indeed was an advantageous location for artillery. He moved his artillery and troops to Combs Hill and put General Knox in command of the artillery unit. Knox is considered to have been the best artilleryman in the two armies. Clinton ordered Cornwallis to attack Greene’s troops and equipped him with the best troops in the British Army. Cornwallis’ troops were struck with severe artillery fire as they got close to Combs Hill. One eye witness swore that “one round shot struck the muskets from the hands of an entire platoon”. Cornwallis pushed his troops forward and ordered a bayonet charge on Greene’s troops. The Continental
troops fired numerous volleys into the advancing British troops and successfully held the important hill. Washington summarized the events at Combs Hill best in his general orders on June 29 when he stated, “the enemy have done [General Knox and his artillerymen] the justice to acknowledge that no artillery could be better served than ours”. The defense of Combs Hill brought an end to the artillery battle. The Continental Army captured the British Army in a crossfire of artillery from Perrine Ridge and Combs Hill. Washington fired on the front lines of the British Army, while Knox’s artillery atop Combs Hill fired on the British flank. The British Army withdrew to a safer location that was out of the range of Washington and Knox’s artillery units. This stand marked the beginning of the British Army’s withdrawal from the battlefield.  

It has been argued that von Steuben’s training during the 1777-1778 winter, had exaggerated accomplishments but here is the best example of his success. At the end of 1777, American soldiers, under the command of General John Sullivan at Brandywine, chaotically retreated at the sight of Cornwallis’ superior troops. Less than a year later but following a full winter of military drills, the Continental troops remained in form, obediently followed orders that put the soldiers in harm’s way, and defeated the elite troops of the British Army through an exchange of musket volleys. Cornwallis had to order the best British troops to retreat due to the Continental Army’s disciplined musket volleys and artillery fire.

While Cornwallis was battling Greene on Combs Hill, a British detachment attacked General Wayne’s troops in the center of the battlefield, in the vicinity of the Tennent parsonage, the former parsonage of the famous evangelistic Presbyterian clergymen, William and Gilbert Tennent. The British force was comprised of grenadiers, light infantry, and light dragoons.

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Wayne was enthusiastic at the opportunity of an independent fighting command, and his men responded with confidence and enthusiasm. The Continental soldiers waited patiently for the British soldiers to march closer and then fired a wave of musket balls. This musket volley killed many of the British soldiers, and the surviving British troops quickly re-formed in order to attempt a second charge. Wayne’s men, with the additional help of Maxwell and Scott’s troops who were passing by on their way to the rear, allowed the British to closely approach once again before they unloaded their musket fire on the enemy soldiers. Similar to the first charge, the British soldiers were stopped and suffered massive casualties. After an hour, the British detachment attempted a third charge upon Wayne’s troops. Wayne ordered his men to hold fire until the British soldiers came closer and to shoot specifically at the officers, which he called “King birds”. For the third time, the British charge was ravaged by the Continental Army’s musket volleys. The third charge was decisive because Wayne’s troops killed or severely wounded the four main leaders of the British force: Captain John Gore, Harry Ditmus, Captain Andrew Cathcart, and the leader of the entire charge Lt. Colonel Henry Monckton. After the third charge, British reinforcements arrived and flanked Wayne’s troops. Wayne ordered a retreat, but only after heavy damage had been inflicted upon the British Army. The fight also allowed Stirling, atop Perrine Ridge, and Greene, atop Combs Hill, to complete the set up of their artillery batteries and they were able to keep the British forces in check after Wayne’s retreat to Perrine Ridge. The British Army controlled the low ground around the Tennent farm, but the Continental Army controlled the vastly important high ground of Perrine Ridge and Combs Hill.63

The Continental Army had defeated numerous offensive charges by the British Army, yet Clinton’s primary goal of securing his baggage train was accomplished with Knyphausen’s safe

arrival in Middletown. The British general realized he would not be able to outflank Washington and capture his army, so Clinton ordered a general retreat. As he had performed throughout the British march through New Jersey, Washington ordered his troops to attack the retreating British troops to make it appear as if they were chasing the enemy off the battlefield. As dusk fell on the battlefield, Clinton’s troops successfully retreated to beyond the Middle Ravine, which offered protection from any late Continental charges. Washington ordered his troops to sleep on the field, in anticipation that the battle would resume the next day. Washington slept on the battlefield under the stars amongst his men and gained even more of their respect and admiration.  

Despite being under close surveillance by a regiment of Connecticut troops, Clinton’s army retreated around midnight undetected. There was a new moon the night of June 28th and the minimal moonlight aided the British Army’s retreat. The midnight British retreat ended the battle of Monmouth. There are reports of up to 400 to 500 American deaths and up to 800 British deaths. The official records of each army states 69 American deaths and a total of 360 casualties, and 123 British deaths and a total of 358 casualties. These totals may have been exaggerated but it is safely presumed by many historians that the two armies’ casualty rates were similar, with the American death total near 70 and the British total between 150 and 200.  

The heat had an incredible effect on the battle. The highest recorded temperature was 107 degrees, and Cornwallis reported that it was 96 degrees in the shade. During the battle, each army lost sixty to eighty men due to heat stroke. This tally weighed upon the British Army more heavily than the Continental Army because it had already lost over 100 men to heat stroke on its

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march through New Jersey. The heat also affected military strategies as the battle became artillery based in the afternoon in order to allow the soldiers to rest and re-energize. Prior to the afternoon artillery battle, the hedgerow skirmish could have ended differently had it not been for the British soldiers’ exhaustion after marching up to ten miles in the heat with sixty pound packs. Clinton discussed the heat’s effect on the hedgerow skirmish in a letter to his sisters on July 6th

[Had] the season been not so unfavorable, I will not scruple to say a most advantageous stroke might have been expected. But with the thermometer at 96- when people fell dead in the street, and even in their houses- what could be done at midday in a hot pine barren, loaded with everything that [the] poor soldier carries? It breaks my heart that I was obliged under those cruel circumstances to attempt it

In Clinton’s perspective, the heat was the main cause for his army’s defeat at the battle of Monmouth. While there were additional causes for the outcome at the battle of Monmouth, the intense heat drastically affected the armies’ abilities to fight an aggressive, march based style of warfare.  

The battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778 was a significant battle for its designation as the last major battle in the northern theater but also for its sheer size and length. It was the longest one-day battle of the American Revolution. The battle started at seven o’clock in the morning when the Queen’s Rangers attacked von Steuben’s reconnaissance party and the fighting did not end until six o’clock in the evening, when Washington halted his troops that were in pursuit of Clinton’s retreating troops. The general action was also the largest one-day battle in terms of the number of participants, and it was the last time the two main armies of each side met on a battlefield.  

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66 Clinton, American Rebellion, quote at 94.
67 Bilby and Jenkins, Monmouth Court House, x (in the preface).
After the battle of Monmouth, the British Army marched to Middletown, where they rested before marching to Sandy Hook on June 30\textsuperscript{th}. Under the protection of Admiral Richard Howe’s fleet, Clinton’s troops crossed over to Sandy Hook, an island in colonial times, via a bridge of barges. Clinton’s men were extremely relieved to have water between themselves and the Continental Army and were able to sleep “as peacefully as young children” on the white sand of the beach that made the “softest bed”. The well-rested men continued on to Long Island and New York City aboard Howe’s ships. This evacuation occurred from July 1-7. From New York City, Clinton sailed his troops to the southern colonies, effectively surrendering the New England and Mid-Atlantic colonies, if not New York City itself, in hopes of salvaging the Southern colonies. Washington decided not to pursue Clinton because the British Army was at an easily defended position in Middletown and was further protected by Howe’s warships when they reached Sandy Hook. The majority of the Continental Army rested on June 29\textsuperscript{th}. They buried the dead and took care of the wounded. On June 30\textsuperscript{th}, Washington’s troops marched towards White Plains, New York; the site of Washington’s new headquarters, where he would be able to keep an eye on British actions in New York City. The march to White Plains was comprised of “easy marches”, which meant the men would break camp at three o’clock in the morning, march ten miles, and make camp around one or two o’clock in the afternoon. Every third day the army would rest. The summer of 1778 ended with the armies in the same locations as they were after the winter of 1776-1777: the British Army in New York City and the Continental Army in the surrounding areas.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{68} Ewald, \textit{Diary of the American Revolution}, 136-138. The quote is found on page 138.; Bilby and Jenkins, \textit{Monmouth Court House}, 226-227.; Martin, \textit{A Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier}, 115.
The battle of Monmouth was indecisive as the Continental Army ended the battle in possession of the field, but Clinton accomplished his goal of arriving in New York City with his baggage train intact. Clinton wrote in his report to the British Ministry:

The rear guard of the King’s army is attacked on its march by the avant garde of the enemy. It turns upon them, drives them back to their gross, remains some hours in their presence until all its advanced detachments return, and then falls back, without being followed, to the ground from which the enemy had been first driven, where it continues for several hours undisturbed, waiting for the cool of the evening to resume its march.

Despite Clinton’s self-serving description of the outcome of the battle, the most important facts are that the Continental Army retained control of the field and prepared to continue the battle in the morning, while the British Army snuck quietly away in the dark of night. The best evidence of an American victory is Charles Gravier’s response upon hearing the news of the battle. The French Foreign Minister remarked “‘England has lost America forever’”.

The Continental Army’s strategic adaption to the environmental conditions during the battle led it to victory. Washington placed his artillery on the two high points of the battlefield that were further protected by streams and marshes. These two artillery strongholds created crossfire of cannon shot that the British Army could not evade. The Continental Army was also better prepared for the extreme heat. Washington ordered his men to march without their packs, whereas the British Army fought with sixty pound packs atop their backs. To deal with the heat that was a “trifle” cooler than “the mouth of a heated oven”, the American soldiers shed excess clothing throughout the battlefield. In addition to the cooler uniforms, the Continental Army was supplied with spring water, delivered by American women. The British soldiers, already exhausted by a ten-day march through New Jersey, were forced to fight the entire battle in heavy

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69 Clinton, American Rebellion, quote at 97.; Gilman, Monmouth Road to Glory, 52.
wool uniforms, uncomfortable headgear, and with a minimal and limited amount of water. One of the crucial turning points in the American Revolution was accomplished by the Continental Army’s effective use of the local terrain and adoption to the weather conditions.  

**Bibliography**

**British and Hessian Primary Sources**

It was surprisingly easier to find primary sources, such as diaries or letters, from the Hessian soldiers than British or American soldiers. Throughout my research, I wanted to use diaries of the common soldier, rather than memoirs or reports written by the leaders. These sources were very informative of the conditions during the march across New Jersey. Unfortunately, the Hessian primary sources added little to the battle events since the majority of the Hessian soldiers remained with the baggage train rather than fight the Continental Army. General Clinton’s report was interesting to read because it offered a completely different perspective on the battle than the American sources.

Burgoyne, Bruce E, ed. *Enemy Views: The American Revolution as recorded by Hessian Participants*.


**American Primary Sources**

It was very difficult to find primary sources from the common soldier in the Continental Army. Joseph Plumb Martin’s account was essential to my discussion of the battle because he was part of numerous crucial events during the battle. General Washington and Greene’s writings allowed me to know their thoughts and motivations for going to battle with the British at Monmouth.

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**Secondary Sources focused on the British Army**

I used Sylvia Frey and Franklin and Mary Wickwire’s books to gain a grasp on the composition of the British Army, including the vastly important factor of the wool uniforms.


**Secondary Sources focused on the Continental Army**

These sources were extremely important in filling in the gaps from the primary sources. William Stryker’s *The Battle of Monmouth* and Joseph Bilby and Katherine Jenkins’ *Monmouth Court House* were the two most used secondary sources for their extensive discussions on the actual battle events of the battle of Monmouth. Numerous other secondary sources enabled me to broadly discuss the background events that led to the battle of Monmouth and allowed me to discover the impact of the leaders’ personalities and decisions.


**General Secondary Sources**